

**Tips for Self-Care**  
from  
*Tools for Healing*  
by  
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**DIET:** A healthy, well-balanced diet of proteins, vegetables, fruit, grains and a minimum of fats and sugars is important. We can educate ourselves on what comprises a healthy diet, information that is available from our physician, the American Heart Association or other health groups. It is useful to know that too much sugar depletes us, and to discover which foods energize us.

**EXERCISE:** Regular exercise like walking, running, swimming, bicycling, tennis, racquetball, and so on is recommended at least three times a week. If you are under stress, daily exercise anywhere from 20 minutes to two hours can increase energy and a sense of well being. This can make a particular difference after a loss, trauma or stress.

**REST:** In contrast to activity, we may also need rest. Those of us who tend to drive ourselves particularly hard may recover best with rest periods, lying down and taking it easy sometime during the day. "Cat naps," reading breaks or closing our eyes for 15 minutes can be rejuvenating. Both rest and sleep can regenerate us.

**MEDITATION:** This is another form of rest or rejuvenation. Taking 20 minutes one to three times a day to go inward can be very healing, as daily quiet time can help us relax and regenerate ourselves. There are many techniques and books on meditation. One simple form of meditating is to sit with eyes closed, listening to classical music, for one side of a long-playing record is approximately 20 minutes.

**PEOPLE SUPPORT:** The support of a friend, colleague, therapist, counselor, teacher, minister or rabbi can be valuable nourishment. We benefit when we can talk intimately, clear up feelings and reactions, be understood or have a witness to our experience, and be encouraged to move forward. Friends and family may worry too much about us or get involved in our problems or be unavailable, so at times someone outside our regular life can be very supportive in regaining balance.

**NOURISHMENT:** Activities that nurture our bodies, like massages, hot baths, sun baths or whatever personally appeals to us, are particularly supportive. This kind of nourishment is not related to eating and food. Many of us habitually deny our needs, so we may have to dig deeply to discover what would nourish us.

**TIME ALONE:** At times it may be beneficial to take time to be alone to do nothing, look at the scenery, to read, to daydream, to watch television and particularly to rest.

How much time alone each of us needs may vary. Taking time for oneself can be a way for spirituality and creativity to emerge during or after the time spent alone.

**TIME OFF:** This means time away from the usual routine, a contrast from the every day, like vacations or days away from home. If vacations are not feasible, consider a drive or walk in the country or any environment that is different from usual.

**PLAY:** Play one hour a day can be regenerating. Many of us have lost the idea of play while growing into adulthood. We may need to look again at what play would involve for us now -- games, sports, shopping or crossword puzzles are a few examples of what we might enjoy. It is startling, yet true, that as adults we do not generally have much fun.

### **EXERCISE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR WELL-BEING**

After reading the above steps regarding self-care, make a list of specific steps that would be beneficial for you. What relaxes you? What delights you? What engages you? What is fun for you? Write all these answers down for further use, and carry them in your daily calendar or post them on your mirror or refrigerator.